1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often [415] performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orka* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

The Bison-horn Maria also on occasion 'washes' with the ladle, but generally is cleaner than the Hill Maria, and is beginning to buy cheap soap in the bazaars. He will wash his hands before a meal, unlike the hill man. He has his daily dip, but generally in the evening only; and the women definitely bathe only in the evening on their way back from the fields. Both bathe naked, but they wash their clothes far more readily than the Hill Maria, living indeed in the 'bazaar' plains with several Mahra weavers in their midst.

514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defeca-
515 tion, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

● 356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or
361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

[see CA 1.116 MP 418-419. - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356

Mótiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

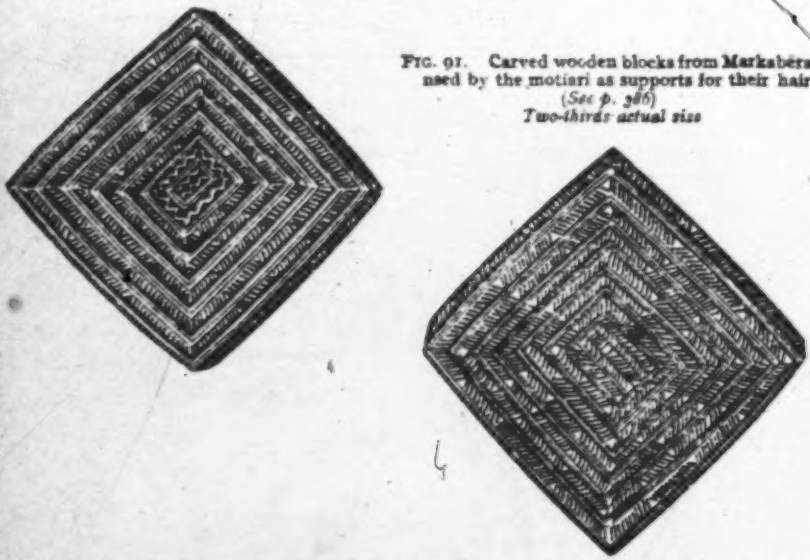

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

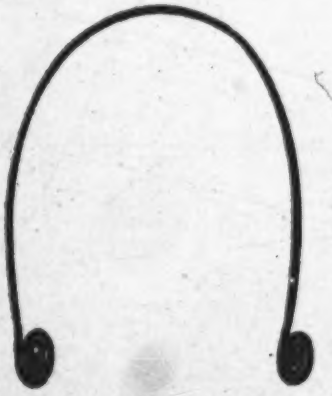

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)